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Patent- og Varemærkestyrelsen
Økonomi- og Erhvervsministeriet

01 February 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Pia Høybye-Olsen".

Pia Høybye-Olsen

A DISTANCE PIECE

Modtaget

28 MAJ 2004

INTRODUCTION

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The present invention relates to a distance piece, e.g. for use in connection with fitting of pre-fabricated building components such as windows or doors. In particular, the invention relates to a distance piece comprising first and second parts having inner surfaces facing each other and forming walls of a space between the parts, and opposite outer surfaces forming part of an outer surface of the distance piece, the parts being movable relative to each other between a contracted relative position with a shorter distance between the outer surfaces and an expanded relative position with a larger distance between the outer surfaces.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Traditionally, building components such as windows and doors are fitted to a building by use of wedges being wedged into a gap between the building and the component. When the component is aligned in the building, final fixation is made in traditional way by use of screws or nails.

Distance pieces or filling chocks have traditionally been made of pieces of trimmed wood. In recent years, however, various wedges made of plastic have been developed, c.f. e.g. EP 08 443444. Since components like windows and doors were previously kept in place by a screw or nail acting on the component in a direction towards the wedge, the wedges had to be left in place after the final fixation. The invention of new location screws which fixate the component in any direction relative to the building has implied new ways of fitting the components and typically, the wedges are removed from the gap as soon as the location screws are attached.

To enable adjustment of the distance between the building and the component, pairs of two wedges are typically inserted in the gap between the building and the component. The wedges are inserted in mutual contact and arranged reversely in respect to each other so that a sharp edge of one wedge is pointing in the direction of a blunt edge of the other wedge. In that configuration, the spacing between the building and the component may be adjusted by hammering on the blunt edge of one of the wedges whereby displacement of one wedge in relation to the other wedge results in formation of a larger gap. During fitting of a component into a building, it can be difficult to keep the wedges in mutual contact, and it often happens that the wedges get separated and fall out of the gap. It is, furthermore, difficult to exactly adjust the distance between the building and the component precisely.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

- It is an object of the invention to provide a distance piece which provides a variable distance and which is simple and cheap. Accordingly, the invention provides a distance piece of the kind mentioned in the introduction and further comprising a separation part with a set of first contact portions being arranged to move between first and second positions in the space for interchangeably being in contact with and being out of contact with a corresponding set of surface portions of the inner surfaces to force the first and second parts towards the expanded relative position and to allow the first and second parts to move to the contracted relative position, respectively.
- 5 The use of a separation part for forcing the first and second parts towards the expanded position by movement of the separation part within the space provides a very simple and thus cheap construction with a very low amount of components moving relative to each other. Accordingly, the distance piece is simple, cheap and reliable compared with traditional distance pieces.
- 10 During use, the building component, e.g. a window, is aligned in the building and the distance piece is inserted into a gap therein between. In this position, the separation part is moved towards the position wherein the sets of first and second surface portions are in contact until the outer surfaces of the first and second parts are in contact with the component and the building, respectively. At this point, the component can be fastened, e.g.
- 20 In a traditional way by use of location screws. After the final fixation of the component to the building, the separation part is moved back to its previous position, thereby releasing the first and second parts, and the distance piece can be removed for later use in another location. The first and second parts and the separation part could be made of wood or steel or made of a polymeric or ceramic material, e.g. a composite material comprising fibres of
- 25 glass, carbon or Kevlar™. The first and second parts could be identical parts, e.g. wedge shaped parts formed with a shape which is triangular in one cross-sectional view of the parts.

To enable an easier operation of the distance piece, the separation part may comprise a handle extending outside the space. The handle may form an ergonomically shaped grip and may be provided with a non-slippery surface, e.g. of a soft resilient polymeric material.

- 30 The first and second parts could be connected by an elastically deformable connection member exerting on the first and second parts a force towards the contracted relative position. The elastically deformable member could e.g. be one or more rubber bands. The first and second parts could also be moulded as one component forming a transition-zone being elastically deformable to allow the two parts to move in relation to each other.

The separation part could be adapted to rotate in the space or it could be adapted to move substantially linearly back and forth in the space. As an example, at least one of the first part, the second part and the separation part could be wedge shaped. By movement of the separation part back and forth in the space, displacement between one or more wedge shaped parts may cause the movement between the contracted and the expanded position.

To ensure movement of the separation part within specific limits in the space, at least one of the inner surfaces may have a groove forming a suspension for the separation part. The groove could have a shape which matches the shape of the separation part to fit tightly around the separation part. As an example, the groove could have a concave or a semi-circular shape when viewed in a cross sectional view perpendicular to the groove, and the separation part could correspondingly have a curved, e.g. a circular curved outer shape when viewed in a cross-section perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the separation part.

In order to maintain the distance piece in its expanded state, a locking feature of the separation part cooperating with a locking feature of at least one of the first and second parts may be provided to enable locking of the separation part in the first position. The lock may comprise a locking surface portion of at least one of the first and second parts engaging a locking surface portion of the separation part. The locking surface portion could comprise an indented portion with a plurality of teeth or indentations cooperating with a similar surface portion or cooperating with a surface portion with a single indentation or a single protrusion to lock movement of the separation part relative to the first and second parts. The provision of a plurality of indentations or protrusions on the separation part and/or on the first or second parts enables locking of the separation part in a plurality of positions relative to the first and second parts and thus enables variable distances between the outer surfaces of the separation part and the first and second parts. Alternatively, or in combination, interference fit between the separation part and the first and second parts may lock movement of the separation part relative to the first and second parts. The separation part could have one position within the space wherein the locking surface portions engage each other and another position wherein they disengage each other. For that purpose, the separation part may in addition to the locking surface portion comprise an unlocking surface portion being smooth relative to the locking surface portion. By movement of the distance part between one position wherein the locking surface portion of the separation part is in contact with the locking surface portion of the first and/or the second part and one position wherein the unlocking surface portion of the separation part is in contact with the locking surface portion of the first and/or the second part, the distance piece may be locked and unlocked, respectively, in its expanded state. As an example, the separation part could be rotated between one position wherein the locking surfaces are in contact with each other and another position wherein the locking surfaces are not in contact with each other. In an alternative embodiment, the distance piece may be

provided for disposable use, i.e. wherein the separation part is locked permanently when brought into the first position so that the distance piece only can be brought from the contracted condition to the expanded condition one single time.

5 The locking surface portion of the first and/or second part could preferably be located in a groove in the inner surface of that part, and the groove could form an extension of the suspension groove. The groove of each part may, when viewed in a plane perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the groove, form semi-circular shapes. When the inner surfaces faces towards each other, the grooves form a circular bearing to receive a cylindrical oblong body part of the separation part.

10 To enable a better pre-fixation of the distance piece in a gap between a building and a component, the outer surface of at least one of the first and second parts may comprise at least one resilient protrusion. Due to the resiliency of the protrusion, the distance piece could be inserted into the gap in the contracted state, in which state the protrusion provides a resilient filling out of the gap and thus holds the distance piece in place until the separation
15 part is moved to the first position to shift the distance piece to the expanded state. In the expanded state, the protrusion is resiliently compressed towards the outer surface of the distance piece. To allow the resiliently compression towards the surface, the resilient protrusion may advantageously be located in a cavity of the surface.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

20 In the following, the invention will be described in further details with reference to the drawing in which:

Fig. 1 shows a perspective, exploded view of a distance piece according to the invention,

Fig. 2 shows a perspective view of the distance piece in an expanded configuration,

Fig. 3 shows a perspective view of the distance piece in a contracted configuration,

25 Figs. 4 and 5 show side views of the distance piece in an expanded and contracted configuration, respectively, and

Figs 6-9 shows an embodiment of the distance piece wherein the first and second parts are wedge shaped.

- As shown in Fig. 1, the distance piece comprises first and second parts 2, 3 having inner surfaces 4 (the inner surface of the second part is not visible in Fig.1) facing towards each other. A space 6 is formed between the first and second parts, and in that space a separation part 9 with a set of first surface contact portions 10, 11 is arranged. The separation part 9 is movable between first and second positions in the space, and by movement of the separation part 9, the surface contact portions 10, 11 (one of the surface contact portions, cf. numeral 11, is on a lower surface of the separation part and is therefore not visible in Fig. 1) are moved between first and second positions in the space for interchangeably being in contact with and being out of contact with a corresponding set of second surface portions 12, 13 of the first and second parts (surface portion 13 is formed on the inner surface of the second part, i.e. facing downwardly, and is not visible in Fig. 1). The surface portions 12, 13 are elevated from the general plane of the inner surface to effectuate the expansion of the distance piece when the separation part is pushed forwardly and thus comes into contact with this surface part.
- 15 The outer surfaces 7, 8 (the outer surface 7 faces downwardly, and is therefore not visible in Fig. 1) of the first and second parts 2, 3 form part of an outer surface of the distance piece. The outer surface comprises resilient protrusions 15 located in cavities of the surfaces. The separation part is adapted to move linearly in the space, to effect the movement of the set of first contact portions 10, 11 between the first and second positions in the space. The handle 17 extends outside the space and can be used to effectuate the linear movement of the separation part from outside the space. Due to the angled end portion 18 of the handle 17, the handle part of the separation part can be rotated between a locked position and an unlocked position. In the locked position, the locking surface portion 16 of the separation part engages the locking surface portion 19 of the first part 2. In the unlocked position, the locking surface portion 16 is offset from the locking surface portion 19. Since the two surface portions do not engage each other, the separation part is free to move linearly back and forth in the space. For this movement, the suspension groove 20 forms a suspension for the separation part. The locking surface portions 16, 19 comprise indented surfaces wherein indentations of one of the portions can be engaged by indentations of the other portion.
- 30 To exert a force on the first and second parts to move towards each other, when they are not kept in the expanded condition by the separation part, the first and second parts are connected by an elastically deformable connection member, e.g. a rubber band. The two circumferentially extending grooves 21 serve to fixate two of such rubber bands in place.
- 35 In operation, the distance piece is inserted into a gap between a building component and a building, e.g. between a gap in a wall and a window frame. To position and fixate the window frame, the separation part 9 is pushed into the space whereby the first and second parts are

pressed apart, i.e. the first and second parts move relative to each other between a contracted relative position with a shorter distance between the outer surfaces and an expanded relative position with a larger distance between the outer surfaces. In the second position, the separation part is locked by the engagement between the locking surface portions 18, 19.

In Fig. 2, it is clearly seen that the protrusions 15 are located in cavities.

In Fig. 3, it is shown how the locking surface portion 16 locks the distance piece in its contracted position by catching an edge of the opening 22.

In Figs. 4 and 5, it is shown that the contracted relative position between the first and second parts 2, 3 provides a shorter distance between the outer surfaces, c.f. Fig. 5, and that the expanded relative position between the first and second parts provides a larger distance between the outer surfaces, c.f. Fig. 4. In Fig. 4 and 5, it is further shown, that the protrusions 15 could be made on the outer surface of both the first and the second part.

Figs 6-9 shows views of one embodiment of a distance piece comprising wedge shaped parts. The distance piece according to this embodiment comprises a first and a second wedge shaped part 24, 25. To lower the manufacturing costs, these two parts could be identical parts. The separation part comprises an elongated shaft portion 26 which is cylindrical. At one end, the separation part comprises a handle 27 and in its opposite end, a head 28 with an indented locking surface portion 29. When the separation part is arranged between the first and second parts, the elongated shaft portion is received by the recess 31 formed both in the first and the second parts. The recess allows the separation part to slide back and forth in the space between the first and the second parts. In one, locked, position of the head relative to the locking surface portion 30 of the first and/or second part, the separation part is prevented from sliding out of the space and thus keeps the distance piece in a fully or at least partly expanded condition. When the separation part is rotated, the locking surface portion 29 of the separation part and the locking surface portion 30 of the first and/or second part disengage and the separation part can be pulled at least partly out of the space whereby the distance piece collapse. To press the first and second parts towards the collapsed condition, the distance piece comprises two rubber bands 34 which are fixated in the circumferentially extending grooves 35. The first and second parts comprises an outwardly extending protrusion 32 and an inwardly extending depression 33 provided to engage the opposite feature of the mating part of a distance piece and thus to keep the first and second parts in fixed position above each other.

Fig. 7 shows the distance piece of Fig. 6 in a collapsed condition, Fig. 8 shows the distance piece in a partly expanded condition, and Fig. 9 shows the distance piece in a completely expanded condition.

CLAIMS

1. A distance piece (1) comprising first and second parts (2, 3) having inner surfaces (4, 5) facing towards each other and forming walls of a space (6) between the parts, and opposite outer surfaces (7, 8) forming part of an outer surface of the distance piece, the parts being movable relative to each other between a contracted relative position with a shorter distance between the outer surfaces and an expanded relative position with a larger distance between the outer surfaces, characterised in that the distance piece further comprises a separation part (9) with a set of first surface contact portions (10, 11) being movable between first and second positions in the space for interchangeably being in contact with and being out of contact with a corresponding set of second surface portions (12, 13) of the first and second parts, in the first position to force the first and second parts towards the expanded relative position and in the second position to allow the first and second parts to move to the contracted relative position.
2. A distance piece according to claim 1, wherein the separation part is adapted to move linearly in the space, to effect the movement of the set of first contact portions (10, 11) between the first and second positions in the space.
3. A distance piece according to claim 2, wherein the separation part comprises a handle (17, 18) extending outside the space to effectuate the linear movement of the separation part from outside the space.
4. A distance piece according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the first and second parts are connected by an elastically deformable connection member (34) exerting on the first and second parts a force towards the contracted relative position.
5. A distance piece according to any of the preceding claims, wherein at least one of the inner surfaces comprises a suspension groove (20, 31) forming a suspension for the separation part.
6. A distance piece according to any of the preceding claims, comprising a locking feature (16) of the separation part cooperating with a locking feature (19) of at least one of the first and second parts to enable locking of the separation part in the first position.
7. A distance piece according to claim 6, wherein the lock comprises a locking surface portion (19, 30) of at least one of the first and second parts engaging a locking surface portion (16, 29) of the separation part.

8. A distance piece according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the locking surface portions comprises at least one protrusion.
9. A distance piece according to claim 8, wherein the at least one protrusion forms part of an indented surface.
- 5 10. A distance piece according to claims 7-9, wherein the locking surface portion of the first and/or second part is located in a groove in the inner surface of that part.
11. A distance piece according to claim 10, wherein the groove forms an extension of the suspension groove.
- 10 12. A distance piece according to any of claims 7-11, wherein the separation part in addition to the locking surface portion comprises an unlocking surface portion being smooth relative to the locking surface portion, the distance part being movable between a locked position wherein the locking surface portion of the separation part is in contact with the locking surface portion of the first and/or the second part and an unlocked position wherein the unlocking surface portion of the separation part is in contact with the locking surface portion of the first and/or the second part.
- 15 13. A distance piece according to claim 12, wherein the separation part is adapted to rotate in the space between the locked position and the unlocked position.
14. A distance piece according to any of the preceding claims, wherein at least one of the first part, the second part and the separation part is wedge shaped.
- 20 15. A distance piece according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the outer surface of at least one of the first and second parts comprises at least one resilient protrusion (15).
16. A distance piece according to claim 15, wherein the resilient protrusion is located in a cavity (23) of the surface.

ABSTRACT

5 The invention provides a distance piece e.g. to replace a traditional wedge e.g. for fitting a window to an opening of a building. The distance piece has two parts which are separable by a separation part. During use, the separation part is inserted between the two parts which are forced apart. In this condition, the separation part is locked to leave the distance piece in the expanded condition. After final fixation of the building component, the separation part can be released and moved to a position wherein the two parts are allowed to revert to a collapsed state. In that way, the distance piece facilitates reuse.

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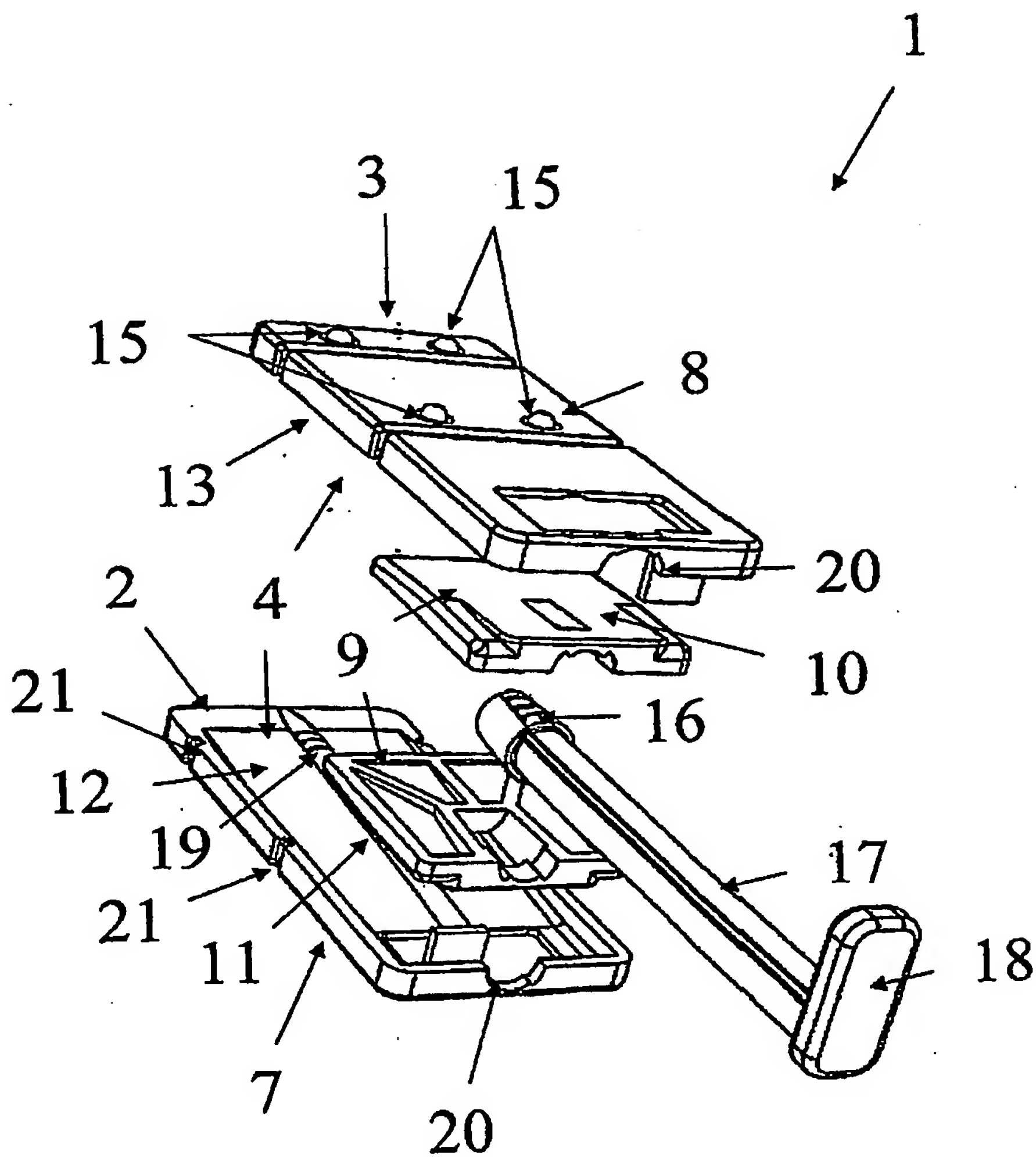


Fig. 1

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PVS

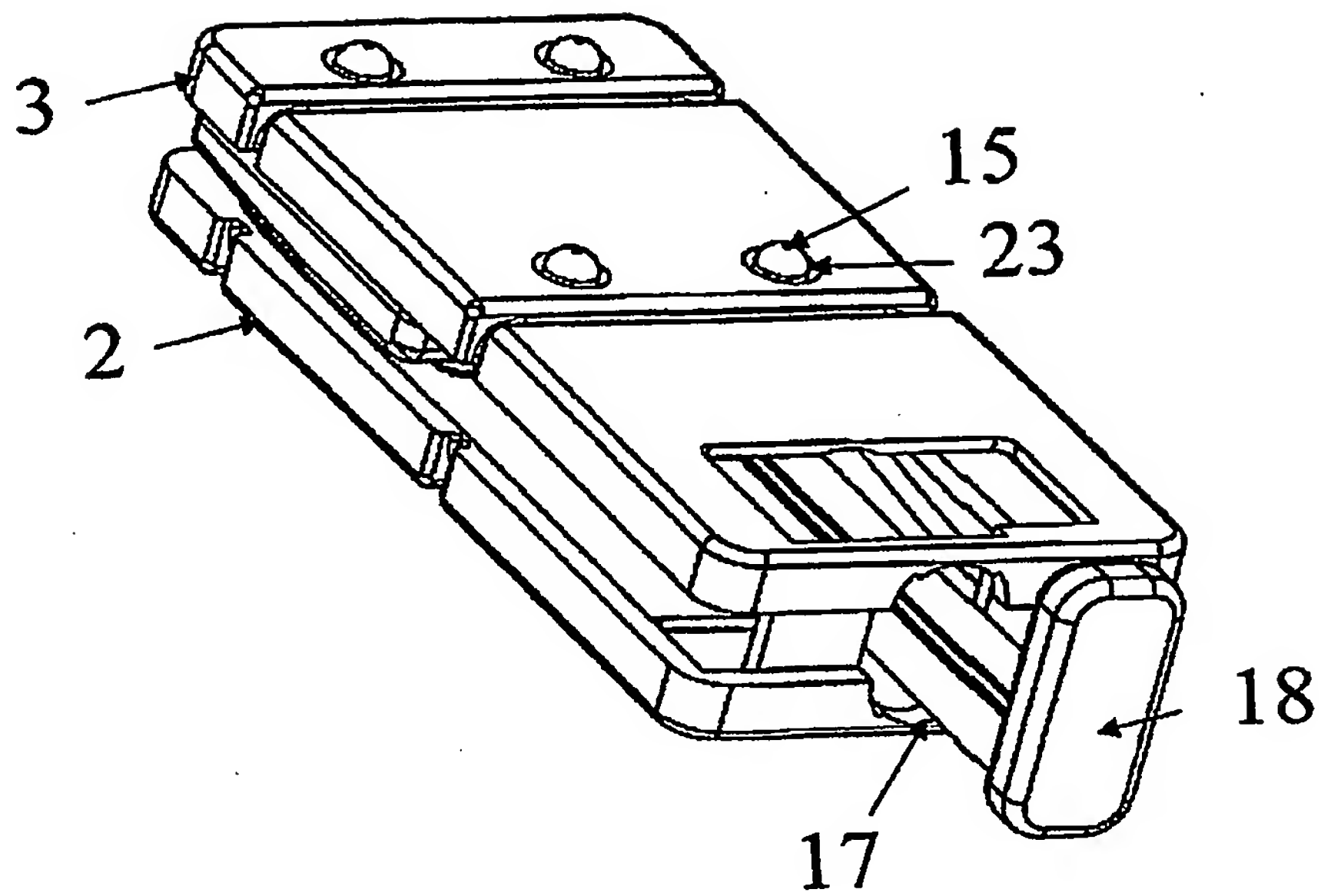


Fig. 2

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PVS

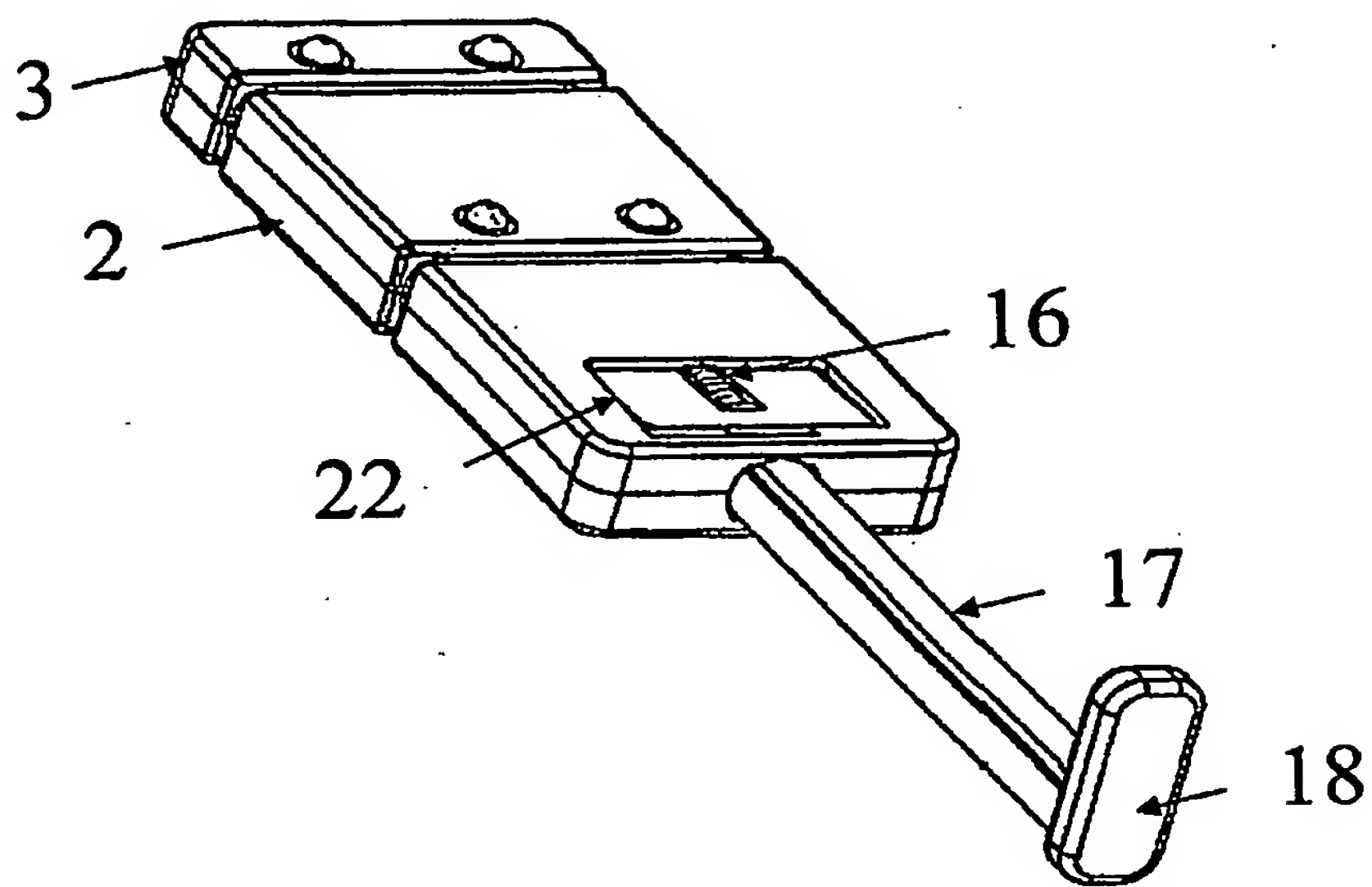


Fig. 3

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Mo...
28 M...
PVS

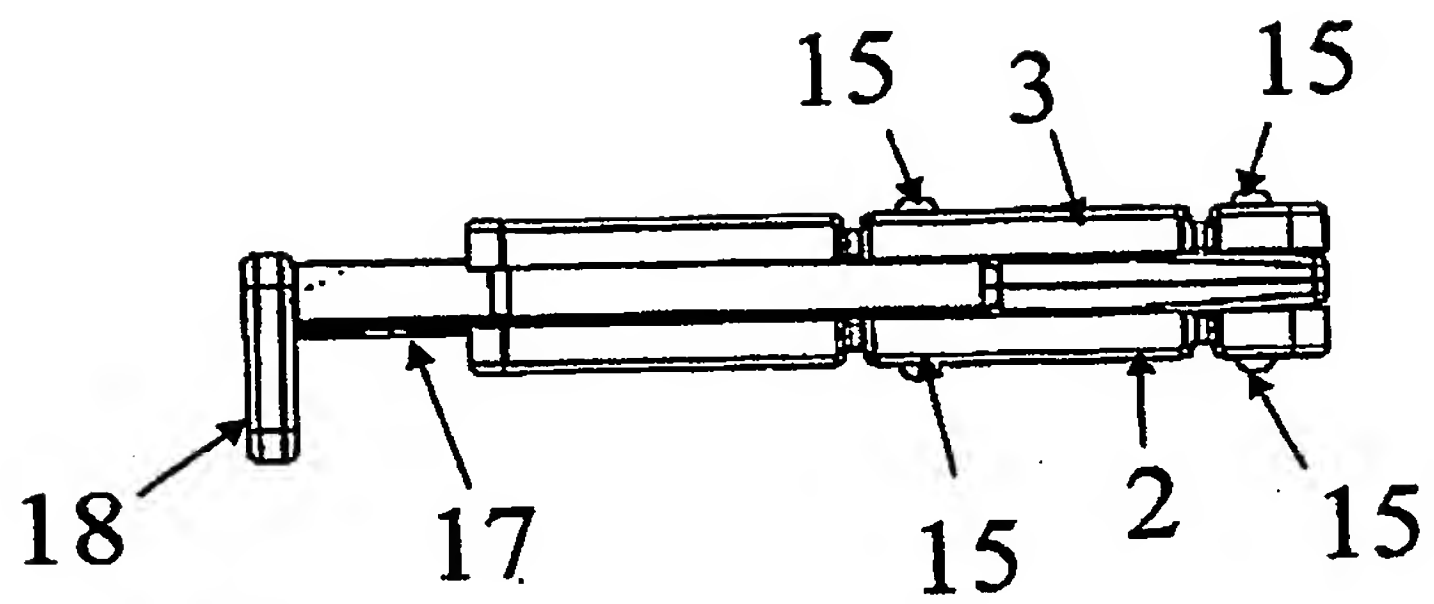


Fig. 4

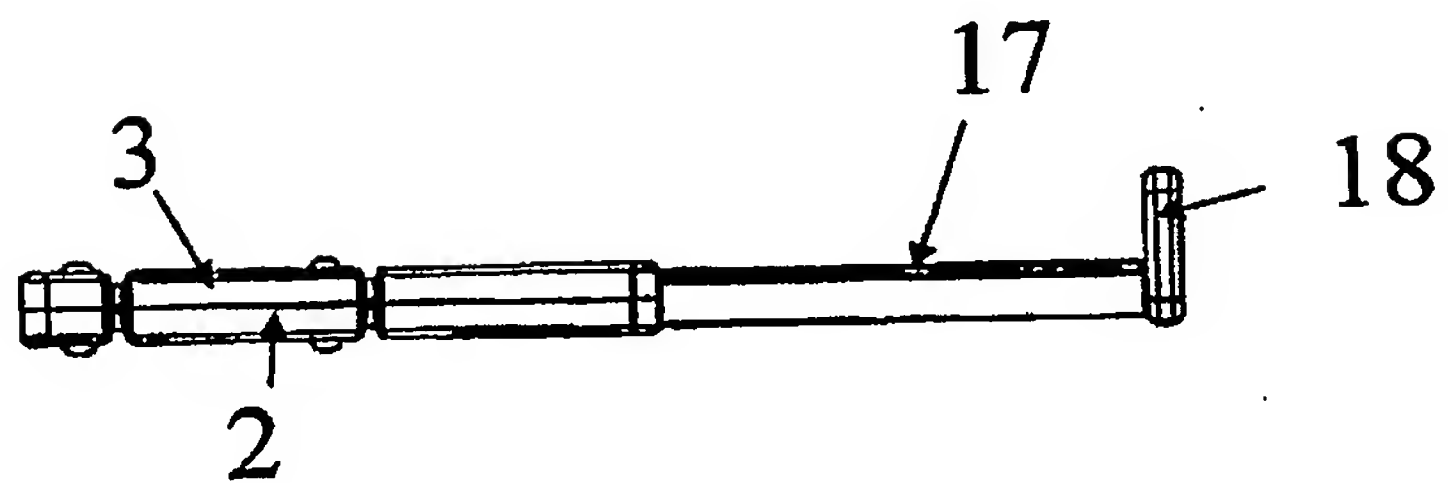


Fig. 5

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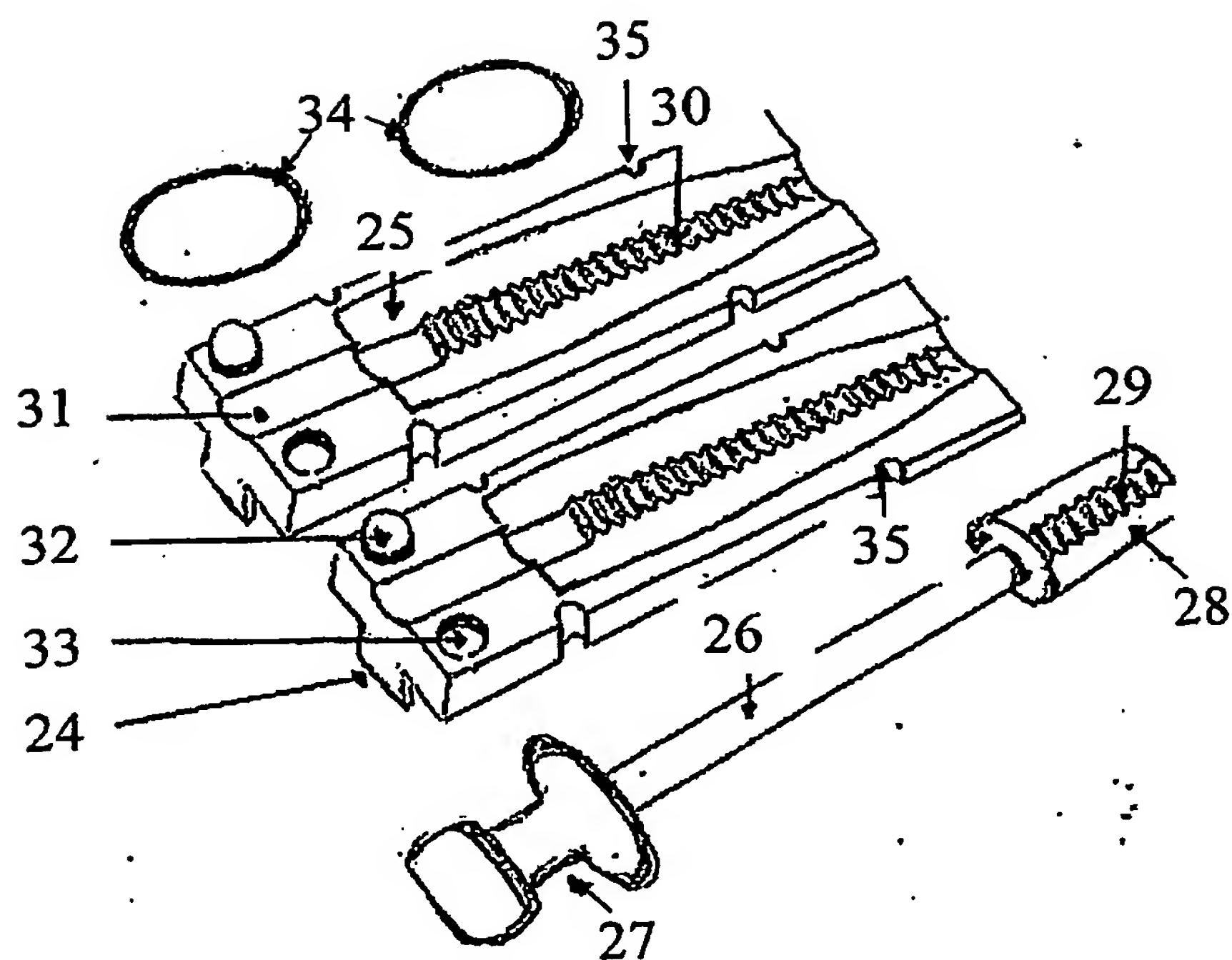


Fig. 6

